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SUBJECT: IRELAND: 2005-2006 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL
STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR) PART I

REF: STATE 209561

[1](#)1. Please see below outline for post's submission as chapter for 2005-2006 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) Part I. POC for this report is Tom Rosenberger (RosenbergerTM@state.gov).

[1](#)2. I. Summary

The Republic of Ireland is not a transshipment point for narcotics to the United States, nor is it a hub for international drug trafficking. According to Government of Ireland (GOI) officials, overall drug use in Ireland continues to remain steady, with the exception of cocaine use, which continued its upward trend. Seizures have also increased as traffickers attempt to import drugs in larger quantities. The GOI's National Drug Strategy aims to significantly reduce drug consumption through a concerted focus on supply reduction, prevention, treatment, and research. In 2004, the GOI signed the European Arrests Warrant Act 2003, allowing Irish police to have suspects detained by foreign police and extradited to Ireland for trial, and the Criminal Justice Act, enabling Irish authorities to investigate international criminality in close cooperation with EU member states. The United States and Ireland signed a mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) in January 2001, which was ratified by the U.S. in 2003 and by the GOI in July 2005. Ireland is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

II. Status of Country

Ireland is not a transit point for drugs to the United States, but it is occasionally used as a transit point for narcotics trafficking to other parts of Europe, including across its land border to Northern Ireland. Ireland is not a significant source of illicit narcotics, though in a single raid in 2004, officials found a quantity of precursors intended to manufacture around Euro 500 million worth of ecstasy and amphetamines.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs in 2005

Policy Initiatives. The GOI continued with drug abuse strategies it established in its National Drug Strategy for 2001-2008. Its goal is to "to significantly reduce the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research." By 2003, substance abuse programs were a part of every school curriculum in the country and the

GOI launched the National Awareness Campaign on Drugs. The campaign featured television and radio advertising, and lectures by police, supported by an information brochure and website, all designed to promote greater awareness and communication about the drug issue in Ireland. Regional Drug Task Forces (RDTF), set up to examine drug issues in local areas, were fully operational throughout the country. The GOI established a review procedure to measure how effectively each department in the government is internally implementing the National Drug Strategy. The GOI released the results and recommendations of this review in June 2005. It found that 49 of the 100 actions set out in the strategy published in 2001 are completed or almost so, progress has been made in 45 of them, and six need considerably more progress. The review made rehabilitation of drug users a fifth pillar of the strategy, and recommended greater availability of needle exchanges and increased resources for community policing. A Working Group was set up to develop a strategy for the provision of integrated drug rehabilitation services. The GOI announced a National Drug-Related Deaths Index on September 27. The index will provide an accurate estimate of people who die directly from drugs and an accurate estimate of people who die as a result of the consequences of drug use.

Accomplishments. Seizures in 2003 totaled Euro 121 million, three times the goal set in the National Drug Strategy, 2001-2008. (Figures for 2004 and 2005 are not yet available). The Justice Minister attributed this both to the increase in usage and improvements in law enforcement. The Irish Police continued to cooperate closely with other national police forces and on June 1, two Irishmen were among 11 people arrested in Spain when over four tons of cocaine, worth an estimated Euro 330 million, was seized. Authorities believe the cocaine was intended for distribution to other European countries, including Ireland.

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Law Enforcement Efforts. Official statistics are not yet available for 2005, but the Irish Police confirmed that drug-related arrests remained constant over the previous three years. There are normally 7,000-8,000 arrests annually, including the approximately 450 arrests made by the National Drug Unit (NDU) each year. The NDU's arrests tend to include most of the large seizures, but local police also have had success. For example, the local police in Limerick seized over Euro five million of narcotics in 2005, including a May 13 seizure of 150 kgs of cannabis resin with an estimated market value of over Euro one million. Each year, 60-65 percent of arrests for drug-related offenses nationwide tend to be for simple possession; 20-25 percent possession with the intention to sell; and the remainder related to obstructing drug arrests or forging prescriptions. In 2003, there were in total 7,150 arrests, of which 25 percent were possession with the intent to sell and 67 percent simple possession. Cannabis was the drug most often seized, followed by heroin, ecstasy and then cocaine. The value of seized drugs for 2003 was Euro 121 million. (Figures for 2004 and 2005 are not yet available).

Official statistics for 2005 are not yet available, but highlights of key raids, arrests and prosecutions include the seizure on March 22, where Police seized 200kgs of cannabis with an estimated street value of Euro 1.5 million during a search of a house in the Malahide area of Dublin. A man jailed in April 2004 for possession of nearly Euro 16 million worth of cocaine and cannabis had his prison sentence increased from five to seven years by the Court of Criminal Appeal in March. On June 30, a man who was caught by police with Euro 108,000 worth of heroin and cocaine in 2004 was jailed for six years by the Dublin Circuit Criminal Court. In July, three men were arrested following the seizure of 20kg of cocaine, worth Euro 1.5 million, in Portlaoise. On August 6, a truck driver, found in possession of cannabis and cocaine with a combined value of over Euro 15 million, in April 2003, was jailed for 10 years at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court. On August 15, the NDU recovered cocaine worth Euro 4.5 million in a raid on a house in Dublin. Police

believe that a major drug gang used the house as a base to prepare, mix and package an average of eight kg of uncut cocaine every two weeks for the past year for distribution across south Dublin. The cocaine recovered had a purity of almost 80 percent, compared to the average street-level purity of between 25 percent and 30 percent. On August 24, as part of the result of an ongoing investigation, police and customs officials seized 1.2 tons of cannabis resin in Kildare valued at Euro 10 million. This resulted in the arrest and detention of three Irish men and a Spaniard under Section 2 of the Drug Trafficking Act. In Dublin, on the same day, police seized some 20 kg of cocaine, worth Euro 1.5 million. On October 4, during a planned raid on a crack manufacturing operation in Dublin, police seized 900g of cocaine, 300g of crack cocaine and other drug paraphernalia. The drugs had an estimated street value of Euro 150,000. On the same day, police and customs service officers seized 15 kg of cocaine, worth Euro 1.2 million, from baggage at Dublin airport, and arrested two women in a follow-up operation.

Corruption. Ireland does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Senior officials of the government do not engage in, encourage, or facilitate the illicit production or distribution of such drugs or substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions.

Agreements and Treaties. The United States and Ireland signed a mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) in January 2001, which was ratified by the U.S. in 2003 and ratified by the GOI in July 2005. An extradition treaty between Ireland and the United States is currently in force, but to date, no extraditions have been implemented in narcotics related cases.

Ireland is a party to the 1998 UN Drug Convention, the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Ireland has signed, but not yet ratified, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Ireland is a signatory to the UN Convention Against Corruption. In 2004, the Irish government signed the Criminal Justice Act into

law, enabling authorities across EU states to investigate international crimes. In 2004, the European Arrests Warrant Act became law, allowing for foreign arrests and extradition.

Cultivation/Production. Only small amounts of cannabis are cultivated in Ireland. There is no evidence that synthetic drugs were produced domestically this year.

Drug Flow/Transit. Among drug abusers in Ireland, cocaine, cannabis, amphetamines, ecstasy (MDMA), and heroin are the drugs of choice. A Council of Europe report on organized crime, published in January, said Ireland had the highest rate of ecstasy and amphetamine use in Europe and the second highest rate of cocaine abuse. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) World Drug Report 2005, published in June, placed Ireland in joint third place (out of 30 European countries) for cocaine use and in joint sixth place for ecstasy use. Cocaine comes primarily from Colombia and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, and cannabis are often packed into cars in either Spain or the Netherlands and then brought into Ireland for distribution around the country. This distribution network is controlled by 6 to 12 Irish criminal gangs based in Spain and the Netherlands. Herbal cannabis is primarily imported from South Africa.

Domestic Programs (Demand Reduction). There are 7,100 treatment sites for opiate addiction, exceeding the GOI's National Drug Strategy target of 6,500 treatment places. The Strategy also mandates that each area Health Board have in place a number of treatment and rehabilitation options. For heroin addicts, there are 65 methadone treatment locations. Most clients of treatment centers are Ireland's approximately

14,500 heroin addicts, 12,400 of which live in Dublin. In 2004, the GOI undertook an evaluation of drug treatment centers' ability to cope with the leveling off of heroin use and the increase of other drugs. Four pilot projects to tackle cocaine use were announced in January, following a number of reports which indicate that abuse of the drug has increased substantially in recent years. The four projects, aimed at different types of drug users in Dublin's inner city and Tallaght, will differ in their approaches to dealing with cocaine abuse. They will include; diversionary therapies aimed at mainly intravenous users, group drug counseling, individual drug counseling, and cognitive behavior therapy.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

U.S. Policy Initiatives. In 2005, the United States continued legal and policy cooperation with the GOI, and benefited from Irish cooperation with U.S. law enforcement agencies such as the DEA. Information sharing between U.S. and Irish officials continued to strengthen ties between the countries.

The Road Ahead. U.S. support for Ireland's counternarcotics program, along with U.S. and Irish cooperative efforts, continues to work to prevent Ireland from becoming a transit point for narcotics trafficking to the United States.

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